

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA H	FORM NO. 382
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own Lexington

Address 20 Meriam Street

Historic Name Willard Brown House

Use: Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1905

Source Mrs. Sarah Brown Shoenhut

Style Colonial Revival

Architect Willard D. Brown (T.H. O'Connor contractor)

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) _____

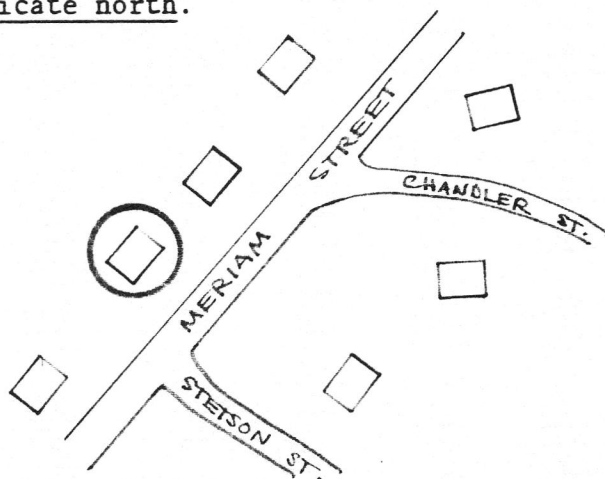
Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage .6 A. (27377 ft.²)

Setting At the foot of Meriam Street;
an area of substantial late-nineteenth
century homes and mid-twentieth century
infill.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

Designed by Willard Brown for his own residence, this is an early example of a building type which was widely built in the twentieth century -- Colonial Revival in feeling but without specific stylistic references. The hip roof with broad overhang and exposed rafter feet was characteristic of Willard Brown's work in his early career, but at this stage he was more likely to use it with materials such as stucco and fieldstone combined into a free style termed by one contemporary account as "Arts and Crafts" (cf. Cary Memorial

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

Willard Dalyrimple Brown was one of four sons of Benjamin F. Brown, an insurance agent in Boston, who came to Lexington in 1876 and settled on Hancock Street. Before 1906 the Brown property was subdivided and Edgewood Road and adjoining lots of which this site was one were laid out. Willard Brown graduated from the MIT School of Architecture in 1894. He then trained in the office of Durgit and Chandler in Boston for two years. He subsequently spent several years of travel and study in Europe. According to his daughter, he was most affected by and spent the most time in the study of Italian architecture.

In 1902 Brown set up practice in Boston. Much of his early work was in Lexington where he designed the Munroe School (1904), Cary Memorial Library (1906), the Parker School, numerous residences, and several remodelings of Colonial houses including the Jonathan Harrington house and the Marrett Munroe house.

Willard Brown's early work is among the most interesting architecture in Lexington. His best buildings are often highly original structures which defy classification, but which appear to draw upon both traditional sources (Shingle and Queen Anne styles) and the new movements "in the air" at the time that he began practice (the Craftsman's Movement, Neo-Rationalism, the Western Stick Style, and possibly the Prairie Style).

Characteristic of his buildings are low hip roofs with broad eaves and exposed rafters, emphasis upon the building's horizontality through various

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Album of works by Willard D. Brown, Lexington Historical Society Collections.

Personal communication from Sarah Emily Brown Shoenhut.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: 382
Property Name: 20 Meriam Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Library and 28 Meriam Street). The house at 20 Meriam Street was well received. It gained an award for the best design for a house costing under \$10,000 from Beautiful Homes magazine and was featured in the March 1909 issue. Plans and further description of the building are in the possession of the Lexington Historical Society.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

design features, and the use of fieldstone, stucco, and shingles. Roofs are occasionally enlivened by the curving up of the eave line into a flattened ellipse, a form which particularly appealed to Brown (see 28 Meriam Street form). Brown designed furniture for some of his buildings.

Perhaps Brown's most creative structure was "Journey's End," designed in 1906 for J. Willard Hayden as a summer house. The brick-paved stair hall of this house was lighted by electric lights submerged in a central pool and dispersed through prisms of glass. The staircase was finished with rough logs and branched elm sticks as a balustrade (see 110 Shade Street form).

Brown also designed in a fairly correct Colonial style, particularly in his later buildings, and collaborated with the other architect who resided in Lexington at the time, Wm. Roger Greeley of Kilham, Greeley and Hopkins, on Cary Memorial Hall built in 1927.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
20 MERIAM ST.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

H	382
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

A brief notice found in the *Lexington Minute-man* provides additional information on the construction of this house. On August 5, 1905 the paper reported that:

The cellar is already under way for a house to built on Merriam street on the site of the coachman's cottage at the rear entrance of "Edgewood" on that street, owned by Mr. Benj. F. Brown. The house is for Mr. Willard D. Brown, the architect, and will be occupied by his family. The contract has been awarded to T. H. O'Connor, the carpenter and builder who, since he has gone into business for himself has steadily been making a reputation for first class work which now requires the most experienced, skilled labor and practical knowledge of details. The house is to be even larger than the one building for J. Chester Hutchinson on Winthrop road, for which Mr. Brown is the architect and Mr. O'Connor the builder. The little cottage that has been moved off the sight to a location some distance away is to be remodelled and renovated for rental, this work also being in charge of Mr. O'Connor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Lexington Directories, various dates.
Lexington Minute-Man, August 5, 1905.
Middlesex County Register of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.
U.S. Census Records, 1900-1930.

Supplement prepared by:
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